DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 544 CS 501 457

AUTHOR Cissna, Kenneth N.
TITLE Interpersonal Confirmation: A Review of Current Theory, Measurement, and Research.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (Portland, Oregon, April 1976); Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Interpersonal Competence; *Interpersonal Relationship; Literature Reviews; Measurement; Research; Theories
IDENTIFIERS *Interpersonal Confirmation

ABSTRACT

The subject of interpersonal confirmation has been explored at the University of Denver during the past five years. The resultant body of literature--research and theory--remains largely unpublished and is summarized here. The paper briefly reviews the origin of the interpersonal use of the term "confirmation" and offers an initial definition of the phenomenon. The first section of the paper describes a number of empirical investigations which suggest the pervasiveness of interpersonal confirmation. The second section outlines two theories of interpersonal confirmation, one by Evelyn Sieburg and one by Carl Larson. The third section reviews two procedures for measuring interpersonal confirmation. The fourth section discusses completed research using the confirmation paradigm and mentions current research projects. The paper concludes by suggesting that perhaps the concept of confirming communication can bring unity to the discrepant definitions of the term "interpersonal communication." (Author/JM)

INTERPERSONAL CONFIRMATION:

A REVIEW OF CURRENT THEORY, MEASUREMENT, AND RESEARCH

Kenneth N. Cissna

Department of Communication

Saint Louis University

St. Louis, Missouri

This article is a revision and update of a paper presented to the Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, Illinois, April, 1976, and to the International Communication Association Convention, Portland, Oregon, April, 1976.

INTERPERSONAL CONFIRMATION:

A REVIEW OF CURRENT THEORY, MEASUREMENT, AND RESEARCH

An Abstract

The subject of interpersonal confirmation has been explored in some detail at the University of Denver during the past five years. Unfortunately, this research and theory is relatively unavailable to other scholars in the discipline because the work remains largely unpublished. This paper is an attempt to summarize this important body of literature for those who are otherwise unacquainted with it or who are acquainted with only a portion of it.

After briefly reviewing the origin of the interpersonal use of the term "confirmation" and offering an initial definition of the phenomenon, the paper consists of four major parts.

1. The first section describes a number of empirical investigations which suggest the pervasiveness of interpersonal confirmation. Studies by Sieburg and Larson, Larson, Dodge, Mix, Ross, and Clarke are outlined and the section concludes that "research evidence to date indicates that confirmation/disconfirmation may be the only dimension underlying all interpersonal human communication."

2. The second section outlines the two theories of interpersonal confirmation. Sieburg's theory is presented and its unique features noted. Larson's theory is then described similarly. This section then contrasts and critiques the two theories. Three critical points of difference are discussed and research relevant to them is reviewed.

3. The third section of this paper reviews two types of procedures for measuring interpersonal confirmation. Methods for measuring confirming/disconfirming communication behaviors and for measuring an individual's feeling of being confirmed by another are both described. Evidence regarding the reliability and validity of the instruments is reviewed.

4. The final section of the paper reviews completed research using the confirmation paradigm and also mentions research projects which are presently underway. Empirical investigations by Sieburg, Sundell, Jacobs, Clarke, Cissna, and Sutton are described. Additional research topics are suggested and a research project presently underway dealing with the relationship between agreement/disagreement and confirmation is mentioned.

The paper concludes by suggesting that perhaps the concept of confirming communication can bring unity to the discrepant definitions of the term "interpersonal communication." Incorporating definitions which focus on level of interaction, quality of interaction, and basis for predicting interpersonal outcomes, perhaps communication which confirms (or communicates an acceptance of) the self of the other is truly "interpersonal" communication.

INTERPERSONAL CONFIRMATION:

A REVIEW OF CURRENT THEORY, MEASUREMENT, AND RESEARCH

> O can accept (confirm) P's definition of self. As far as we can see this confirmation of P's view of himself by O is probably the greatest single factor ensuring mental development and stability that has so far emerged from our study of communication.
> (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967, p. 84)

Long thought to be important in human relationships, recent speech communication research at the University of Denver is revealing that confirmation/disconfirmation may be the most pervasive and important aspect of interpersonal communication. First labeled by Sieburg (1970) "confirmation/disconfirmation" and by Ross (1973) "acceptance/rejection," it now appears that whatever else may be going on while people communicate, they are also and always perceiving themselves in their communicative behavior as confirming (accepting) or disconfirming (rejecting) the other person and they are perceiving the other as communicating with them in a similar fashion. Sieburg and Larson (1971) define these concepts: "Briefly, confirmation, as used in an interpersonal sense, refers to any behavior that causes another person to value himself more. Its opposite, 'disconfirmation,' refers to any behavior that causes another person to value himself less" (p. 1). The purpose of this paper is to describe recent speech communication research and theory regarding this important phenomenon. This paper is important and appropriate at this time because the growing body of research and theory regarding interpersonal confirmation is largely unpublished, mostly doctoral dissertations and convention papers, and is generally unavailable to most scholars in the discipline. This paper will integrate into one document this variety of literature.

While empirical research on confirmation is scarcely five years old, the interpersonal use of the term apparently originated in the philosophical

writings of the Jewish theologian Martin Buber. Buber (1957) saw confirmation as basic to humanness and as providing the test of the degree of humanity present in any society. The British psychiatrist R. D. Laing (1961, 1969) quoted extensively from Buber in his description of confirmation/disconfirmation as a communicated quality which exists in a relationship between two persons. Though Laing developed confirmation at a conceptual level more thoroughly than anyone prior to him, his focus remained psychiatric: he was concerned with the effects of pervasive disconfirmation on his patients who had been diagnosed as schizophrenic. Evelyn Sieburg (1969; 1970; 1972; 1973; 1974; 1975; 1976; Sieburg & Larson, 1971) provided the first systematic treatment of confirmation within the speech communication discipline. She first synthesized confirmation-related literature from a variety of disciplines; she created the first empirical indicator which rendered confirming/disconfirming communication behaviors observable; and she devised the first scale which allowed for measurement of an individual's feeling of being confirmed by another person.

The remainder of this paper is composed of four parts. The first section describes a series of empirical investigations which suggest the pervasiveness of interpersonal confirmation. The second section outlines the two theories of interpersonal confirmation, with attention to critical differences between them. The third section describes present means of measuring interpersonal confirmation. The final section reviews completed research projects which have used aspects of the confirmation paradigm.

Pervasiveness of Interpersonal Confirmation

Several recent investigations contribute to suggesting the pervasiveness of interpersonal confirmation. The widely quoted paper by Sieburg and Larson (1971) is the first source of the claim that confirmation/disconfirmation may be the most pervasive dimension in human communication. Their factor analytic

study of the types of responses characteristic of subjects' "most preferred" and "least preferred" communication partners revealed that the same two factors were present in the descriptions of both types of partners. The responses characteristic of the "inappropriate-unclear-impersonal" factor across both partners were: impervious, interrupting, irrelevant, tangential, impersonal, unclear, and incongruous. The responses that constituted the "appropriate-clear-positive" factor across both partners were: direct verbal acknowledgement, agreement about content, supporting, clarification of content, and expression of positive feelings. Since these response types were consistent with the literature regarding interpersonal confirmation, the first factor was labeled "disconfirming," while the second factor was labeled "confirming." One response, "agreement about content," which was described as characteristic of the "most preferred" partners, did not fit with the previous theoretical literature; Buber, Laing, and Sieburg agreed that agreement was not necessary for confirmation to occur--that agreement itself was neither confirming nor disconfirming. Curiously, "agreement about content" did not contribute to the factor structure of the least preferred partner, and "disagreement about content" did not contribute to either factor for either target person. The place of agreement/disagreement in interpersonal confirmation is still not finally resolved.

The second source of the claim for the pervasiveness of confirmation in interpersonal relationships comes from a series of investigations initiated and directed by Carl Larson (Larson, 1965; Dance & Larson, 1976). Four doctoral dissertations (Dodge, 1971; Larson, 1965; Nix, 1972; Ross, 1973) investigated participants' perceptions of their communication with another and their perceptions of the other's communication with them in four different interpersonal contexts (respectively, counselors-juvenile delinquents, spouses,

fathers-sons, and supervisors-subordinates.* All these dissertations employed the same measure (Ruesch, Block, & Bennett, 1953) which asked the participants to describe the extent to which each of 50 items was characteristic of their communication with the other and the other's communication with them. In each investigation, the researcher employed a factor analytic strategy to identify any basic dimensions in the participants' perceptions of their own and the other's communication. Of the many patterns discovered in the four contexts, only one factor was found to recur in all the social contexts. Ross (1973) labeled this pattern "acceptance-rejection." "The participants tended to see their communication with others, and the other's communication with them, in terms of the extent to which interpersonal communication behavior exhibited or implied an acceptance or rejection of the person as a person" (Dance & Larson, 1976, p. 75). Dance and Larson go on to develop a theory explaining this phenomenon, which will be presented with Sieburg's theory in the next section. For now, it is sufficient to note that the characteristics which contributed to the acceptance-rejection dimension in all or most contexts (Ross, 1973) are very similar to the items which contribute to participants' descriptions of confirming and disconforming communicators (Sieburg & Larson, 1971). Some items are identical and most are quite similar. Both Dance and Larson (1976) and Cissna (1975) recognize the consistency between Sieburg's concept of confirmation/disconfirmation and the acceptance/rejection dimension of Ross. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the dimensions are identical. In addition, Clarke (1973) in his study of marital relationships also concluded that confirmation is a dimension of human communication which seems pervasive across all social contexts. In summary, the research evidence to date indicates that confirmation/disconfirmation may be the only dimension underlying

*In one context, the counselors-juvenile delinquents, only the participants' views of the others' communication with them were solicited. Dodge did not ask respondents to describe their own communicative behavior.

all interpersonal human communication.

Theories of Interpersonal Confirmation

There are two theoretical explanations of interpersonal confirmation. The first belongs to Evelyn Sieburg. This theory has been refined throughout its five year history. Until May, 1975, it was available only through a series of unpublished convention papers. It is now an ERIC Clearinghouse document (Sieburg, 1975) and is available on microfiche in most libraries. A more recent presentation of the theory in an organizational communication context is also available (Sieburg, 1976). The second theory belongs to Carl Larson. Initially presented in lecture form, part of the theory was contained in a recent convention paper (1975). The complete explanation of this theory is contained in a recent book (Dance & Larson, 1976). While these theories are now available for all to study, they have never been compared and the implications of each of them have not been contrasted. This section will briefly present each theory and then move to comparing the theories, observing points of difference as well as similarity.

Sieburg's theory will be presented first. From her review of Buber, Laing, and others writing on confirmation, she derived five criteria that seemed characteristic of confirming communication.

> By way of summary, it appears that human communication is called confirming to the extent that it performs the following functions:
>
> 1. It expresses recognition of the other person's existence.
> 2. It expresses recognition of the other as a unique person, not a role or an object.
> 3. It acknowledges the significance of the other person.
> 4. It expresses acceptance of the other person's way of experiencing the world.
> 5. It expresses concern for the other person and a willingness to be involved with him; that is, it imparts value to the relationship. (1976, p. 132)

Sieburg's theory of interpersonal confirmation then moves to the distinction between "messages" and the accompanying "meta-messages" which are present in any communicative act. The meta-message in human communication concerns the nature of the relationship between the interacting individuals, and has, in fact, been called the "relationship" aspect of a message, as distinguished from the "content" aspect (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Sieburg (1976, pp. 133-134) identified four "meta-messages" which can be implicit in a person's communication which have confirming/disconfirming implications to the other.

1. The first confirming meta-message is "You exist" and the corresponding disconfirming meta-message is "You do not exist." The implications of these messages to the individual's self-experience arise from the existential fear of non-being.

2. The second confirming meta-message is "You are worthwhile," while the disconfirming meta-message is "You do not matter," perhaps with the addendum, "because you are uninteresting or unimportant." Because each person has deep doubts about his or her own worth, this meta-message arouses intense fears of being unnoticed.

3. The third confirming meta-message is "I accept your way of perceiving," while the disconfirming meta-message is "I deny your way of perceiving." Here the implications to self arise out of the fear of guilt, shame, or condemnation.

4. The fourth confirming meta-message is "We are relating" and the disconfirming meta-message is "We are not relating." The dynamic of this meta-message arises out of a fear of alienation, loneliness, or abandonment.

Building on these criteria and the meta-messages implicit in any communicative act, which have implications for confirming or disconfirming aspects of a person's self, the heart of Sieburg's theory is contained in four primary themes, which constitute propositions or predictions about the nature of

different confirming/disconfirming communicative behaviors.

1. It is more confirming to acknowledge another person's existence than to treat him as nonexistent. (1976, p. 134)

2. It is more confirming to accept another's feelings than to deny, modify, interpret, or evaluate them. (1976, p. 139)

3. It is more confirming to respond conjunctively than disjunctively. (1976, p. 142)

While her most recent version does not explicitly identify this final theme, it is implied in the discussion of confirming dialogue (1976, pp. 147-148) and is explicit in earlier presentations of the theory.

4. Personal response is more confirming than impersonal response. (1975, p. 18)

Each of these rather self-explanatory themes is discussed in considerable detail by Sieburg (1973, 1975, 1976). Earlier, these themes (and the accompanying behavioral clusters--see Sieburg, 1975, and the measurement section of this paper) were described as being hierarchical in that it is necessary to confirm as individual at a lower level before confirmation can occur at a higher level. In the 1976 presentation of the theory, Dr. Sieburg no longer describes the themes as hierarchical.

> I can't really be certain that we have established a hierarchy of confirming-disconfirming categories or levels. About all that we can say for sure is that several groupings have emerged and that these groups have differential impacts on the "receiver" in an interaction sequence. Certainly unawareness (or "indifference") forms a base for the others. Without fundamental recognition of another's existence, no confirmation of him can exist. Beyond that, however, there is no real justification for saying that one kind of disconfirming response is more disconfirming than another--just different. (Sieburg, Personal Communication, November 24, 1975)

Non-recognition of the other's existence is most disconfirming and Sieburg goes on to describe the confirming response theme and cluster as being hierarchically distinct from the disconfirming clusters. Just where the impervious and disqualification behavioral response clusters (associated with themes two and three above, respectively--the order in which these two themes

are presented has been switched from Sieburg's (1975) previous publication) fit in relation to one another is not certain.

This concludes the presentation of Sieburg's theory of interpersonal confirmation. This theory centers on the implicit meta-messages that accompany any communication and which have implications regarding the nature of an interpersonal relationship. These meta-messages ultimately define four types of interpersonal confirmation/disconfirmation, as indicated by the four themes which constitute testable predictions about interpersonal confirmation.

The second theory which will be briefly reviewed belongs to Carl Larson. This theory (Dance & Larson, 1976) was not intended as a theory of interpersonal confirmation. It constitutes a theoretical explanation of what Dance and Larson call the "linking function" in human communication at the interpersonal level. Because, however, of the way in which they chose to describe human interpersonal linking, this theory can be seen as an explanation of the same events as Sieburg's: its fundamental concern is the way in which individuals perceive themselves and others communicating different levels of acceptance and rejection in their interpersonal relationships.

Dance and Larson argue that one of the natural and inevitable results of human communication is that individuals "link" themselves with other individuals and with their human environment. This "linking function" occurs through establishing a relationship between one's self and others. While the linking function initially serves to bring the infant into the human symbolic world:

> once the individual is constituted as 'self,' the central operation of the linking function is in an individual's social environment. That is, human communication links people with other people. It is the process through which social bonds are established and maintained, human relationships are defined, and almost all forms of social behavior are manifested. (Dance & Larson, 1976, p. 73)

At this point in the development of this theory, the research of Larson, Dodge, Mix, and Ross described earlier in this paper is detailed. Then two

basic premises or assumptions are presented: (a) "Most communicative acts involve some degree of disclosure." (b) "Acts of disclosure involve risk." What is risked in any human communicative event is the image the individual holds of him or her self. The individual risks having that self-image be rejected by another with whom the individual is in contact. From this, Larson derives his fundamental proposition that: "an individual's communicative linkages with others take two basic forms, acceptance and rejection" (p. 77).

According to Larson, not all human communicative acts involve accepting or rejecting the self-image of an individual. Hence, this theory next describes the behavior of the receiver of a communicative act and focuses on those responses which would cause an "orientational shift" away from the content of a message toward an evaluation of either one's own or the other's self. Dance and Larson (1976) argue that:

> certain classes of responses will focus your attention upon the other or yourself, or both. Then you will either re-value the other as a social entity or you will re-assess characteristics of self. The responses with which we are presently concerned, then, are those responses that orient you toward the nature of the relationship between you and another rather than the content about which you are communicating. (p. 79)

Next, four classes of responses are described which can cause the orientational shift toward the relationship and toward an evaluation of an individual's self. These categories are: (a) explicit rejection, (b) implicit rejection, (c) explicit acceptance, and (d) implicit acceptance. Within each response type, a number of specific ways of responding are described. Explicit rejection can be communicated through negative evaluation of person, negative evaluation of communication content, overt dismissal of person, or overt dismissal of communication content. Implicit rejection can be communicated through interruptions, imperviousness, irrelevant responses, or tangential

responses. Explicit acceptance can be communicated through positive evaluation of person or positive evaluation of communicative content. Implicit acceptance can be communicated through clarifying response, expression of positive feelings, or direct response.

If the self-image of an individual is accepted and reinforced, then everything continues as before. It is when the self-image of an individual is rejected, Larson says, that the most interesting consequences occur. As a result of responses which reject an individual's self-image, one of three paths can be chosen by the individual. The first impact which may occur is a reevaluation of the other. If the other's responses to a person are inconsistent with the person's self-image, one likely alternative is to reevaluate the individual who is perceived as doing the rejecting. This is frequently less stressful than questioning the validity of one's own self-image. A second possible impact is to amplify the aspect of self that is being rejected. If an individual perceives another as rejecting an aspect of the first individual's self-image, the individual may attempt to portray that aspect of self even stronger--to amplify it--in order to finally, somehow have it be accepted and appreciated by the other. The third possible impact is that an individual may attempt to salvage those aspects of self that can be salvaged. When some aspects of self, having been rejected by others, are then abandoned, other aspects of self are frequently gained, aspects that were not previously part of the individual's self-image.

Which of these impacts is most likely to occur depends on three factors: (a) the certainty of the self-image, (b) the importance of the other, and (c) the consistency of the others' responses. When the rejected aspect of one's self is held with great certainty, the individual is likely to reevaluate the other. When the other who is perceived as doing the rejecting is very

important to the individual, the individual is likely to amplify or increase the efforts to project that aspect of self. When the responses of others are fairly consistent in rejecting an aspect of an individual's self, it is likely that the individual will salvage those aspects of self that have been accepted or confirmed by the others.

This completes the presentation of Larson's theory of interpersonal confirmation. This theory was intended as an extension to the interpersonal level of Dance and Larson's theoretical explanation of the operation of the linking function in human communication. Beginning with a recognition of the pervasiveness of interpersonal confirmation, this theory isolates those communicative behaviors which are thought to cause an orientational shift away from the topic of discussion and toward the nature of the interpersonal relationship and toward an evaluation of the self-images of one or both of the parties engaged in interaction. This theory then focuses on those instances in which rejection of the individual's self-image occurs. Specific predictions are made regarding which of three impacts rejection is likely to have depending on three related variables.

While these two theories are quite similar in many respects, they are also different in a number of important ways and may generate different predictions in certain instances with regard to some interpersonal communication events. Both theories are concerned with the same basic phenomenon: the ways in which individuals communicate confirmation (acceptance) or disconfirmation (rejection) in their interpersonal relationships. They are both concerned with the relationship aspect of communication. Both are concerned with the ways in which these communicative acts influence an individual's self-image or self-value.

There are a also a number of ways in which these two theories differ. These differences are perhaps more instructive to the human communication researcher and theorist than are the similarities. Three differences will be

discussed. The first point of difference involves which communicative acts are involved in interpersonal confirmation. Sieburg seems to imply that all communicative acts have confirming or disconfirming consequences, while Larson is quite clear that he is concerned with only some communicative acts. With regard to Sieburg's theory, the conclusion that all communicative acts involve differing degrees of confirmation is not stated explicitly but is implied by the nature of the theoretical structure and the accompanying behavioral clusters. The logical structure of the themes is such that all communicative acts must fall into one of them. Either you ignore the other or you don't; either you accept the other's perceptions or you don't; either you respond directly to the other's content or you don't; either you communicate personally or you don't. Therefore, it would seem that all communicative acts fall within her scheme. This conclusion is further reinforced by the procedures for scoring interaction (Sieburg, 1972), which state that each utterance is to be scored (these scoring procedures are described in the next section of this paper on measurement). Larson, on the other hand, says clearly that he is concerned with only those communicative acts that cause an orientational shift. While he doesn't indicate how frequently such shifts occur, the examples he offers of the responses would seem to imply that these communications, while not occuring constantly, do occur fairly frequently and with some regularity. Within his theory it is always the receiver who ultimately determines the confirming or disconfirming nature of any response. The same comment might cause an orientational shift in one person but not in the other. Larson does not give us any information about what determines the different ways individuals might interpret communicative behaviors that might have confirming or disconfirming consequences. He does mention that in some instances a number of responses of a certain type might be required before the orientational shift and subsequent reevaluation of

self would occur. It seems reasonable to speculate that self-concept and the certainty with which that self-concept is held may be influential in determining in each particular case whether an orientational shift was likely to occur.

Cissna (1975) may provide some support to Sieburg's assumption. He scored audio tape recordings of discussions of married couples. The tapes were scored for the degree of empathy, respect, genuineness, and self-disclosure which were present in each individual's speech communication. The scoring procedure (see Carkhuff, 1969a, 1969b) recognizes that these basic concepts are present in varying degrees (level one through level five) in every communicative act. Cissna found moderate to strong correlations between one person's facilitative communication and the other's feeling of being confirmed. One implication of this research may be that since all speech communication behaviors were being scored and since these scored behaviors were related to the other's feeling of being confirmed, all speech communicative acts are reflected in the extent to which the other feels confirmed. This study is described in greater detail later in this paper.

While there seems to be a great deal of similiarity in the kinds of responses which Sieburg and Larson see as confirming/disconfirming, there is at least one type of response that is present in Sieburg's theory which is not present in Larson's. Sieburg includes as her final theme: "personal response is more confirming than impersonal response." This theme seems to imply that self-disclosure is experienced as confirming to another, and that a corresponding lack of appropriate self-disclosure is experienced as disconfirming. This type of personal, disclosing response does not seem to play a part in Larson's theoretical structure.

The study by Cissna (1975) might again shed some light on this matter.

His examination of interpersonal communication in marriage found that male self-disclosure was related significantly ($r = .31$; $p < .05$) to female feelings of being confirmed, but that female self-disclosing communication was not related to male feelings of being confirmed, ($r = -.16$). This study might suggest that at least in these marriages, the same communicative behaviors may not make up the confirming pattern for both males and females. Hence, personal response may be confirming to females but not to males. This might imply that Sieburg is right for that part of the population that is female or that Larson is right that the behavior of the receiver must be examined in order to discover how he or she orients to the other's communicative behaviors. Perhaps males and females orient differently.

A second difference between the theories concerns the way in which confirmation/disconfirmation is conceptualized. For Sieburg, there seem to be degrees of confirming and disconfirming behaviors--confirmation can be greater or lesser. While this may be merely a matter of the relative emphasis given this point in the two theories, Larson seems to imply that confirmation/disconfirmation is an "either/or" phenomenon. If the orientational shift does occur, then an individual either feels confirmed or the individual feels disconfirmed. His theory does not seem to contain any provisions for feeling slightly confirmed or slightly disconfirmed. It does not seem to allow these units to be present in various degrees. In Robert Dubin's (1969) meta-theoretical terms, Larson seems to see confirmation/disconfirmation as an attribute unit, while Sieburg sees it more as a variable one. This is further evidenced when one looks at the behaviors thought by each theorist to result in confirmation/disconfirmation. Sieburg recognizes that certain behaviors are very disconfirming (Cluster I), while other behaviors are less disconfirming (Clusters II and III), and some behaviors are quite confirming (Cluster IV). She has begun to construct a hierarchy of confirming/dis-

confirming behaviors. Larson distinguishes between implicit and explicit behaviors which cause feelings of acceptance or rejection, but he does not indicate that explicit acceptance (or rejection) is more confirming than implicit acceptance (or rejection) or vice versa. For him, the behaviors seem equal in their confirming/disconfirming potential. Buber (1957) saw confirmation as occuring "to some extent or other" (p. 101) and Laing described in some detail what he called the "different levels of confirmation" (1969, p. 99). Whether Buber and Laing are right is, of course, another matter. It may be that confirmation is a more basic and far less subtle operation than some suspect. It may be that human perceptions of confirmation operate something like "either you're accepting me or you're rejecting me."

Jacobs (1973) provides a partial answer to this question. She attempted to test Sieburg's system. While Jacobs' results were not totally consistent with the 1973 Sieburg Confirmation theory, she did discover that subjects responded differentially to various confirming and disconfirming behaviors. The subjects responded to the experimental conditions in ways that seemed to recognize more levels than merely confirming or disconfirming states. Responses to the various confirming/disconfirming conditions offered to the subjects seemed to fall into the four levels which Sieburg now recognizes, and which have been described in this paper. While the research findings are rarely as clear cut as theories, Jacobs' results seem to imply that groupings of confirming and disconfirming behaviors do exist, which may be classifiable into levels. Sieburg seems to have softened somewhat on this point and moved slightly, but not completely, toward Larson's position. Her previous presentations seemed more at odds with Larson than her most recent chapter.

A third and final difference between the two theories involves the level of predictive specificity they each achieve. Sieburg presents a testable

structure of confirming and disconfirming behaviors, but other than simply test the theory, one wonders what to do with it. She does not deliniate any differential responses to these various conditions. Do the various behavioral clusters have different intra- or inter-personal consequences? We all may have our own suspicions about potential consequences of confirming/disconfirming communication, and interested researchers will hopefully continue to investigate them, but the theory itself does not indicate them. Sieburg, after reading the earlier "convention" version of this paper, responded (Personal Communication, November 24, 1975):

> We need more research as to the interpersonal consequences of the various groupings. [For example,] the family communication literature is full of scholarly speculation that certain kinds of family interaction styles are associated with (cause?) specific pathologies in the family system, or in individual family members.

It would be possible and desirable to relate the various confirming/disconfirming communication clusters to various intra- and inter-personal consequences in families as well as in other social systems. Larson, on the other hand, provides three testable propositions concerning the responses of individuals to various disconfirming events (he does not concern himself with the consequences of confirming communication). Larson formulates the following propositions:

1. "An individual encountering rejection will reevaluate the other if the rejected individual is certain of his own disparaged self-image."

2. "An individual encountering rejection will amplify that aspect of self-image which was rejected if the rejecting other is especially important to the individual."

3. "An individual encountering rejection will modify or revise that aspect of self-image which was rejected if the rejection is consistent with responses provided by others and if the total set of responses encountered by the individual forms a highly consistent pattern." (Dance & Larson, 1976, p. 165)

These kind of predictions with regard to the consequences of interpersonal disconfirmation are most important. Future research is likely to test their efficacy and ultimately lead to their revision and refinement. Similar

propositions regarding the consequences of confirming communication would be equally valuable.

Two theories of interpersonal confirmation, one of Sieburg and the other of Larson, have been presented, compared, contrasted, and briefly critiqued. Three major differences have been discussed: (a) While Sieburg sees all communicative acts as involving confirmation/disconfirmation, Larson sees only certain types of responses as involved in confirming or disconfirming another person. In addition, the particular response of self-disclosure is involved in Sieburg's theory but not in Larson's. Empirical research by Cissna has been briefly described as it might illuminate these points of difference. (b) Sieburg's theory conceptualizes confirmation as occuring at various levels (from most confirming to most disconfirming), while Larson seems to regard confirmation/disconfirmation as a process that is either confirming or disconfirming with no middle ground. Jacobs' study is briefly reviewed with regard to its implications on this issue. (c) Larson provides three testable propositions regarding the consequences of interpersonal disconfirmation, but Sieburg derives no predictions about the intra- or inter-personal consequences of confirming/disconfirming interaction. These predictions are described as useful in advancing the state of our knowledge regarding interpersonal confirmation.

Measurement of Interpersonal Confirmation

There are two different approaches to measuring interpersonal confirmation. One approach involves determining the extent to which one individual exhibits confirming/disconfirming behaviors toward another individual. The second approach involves measuring the extent to which one individual feels confirmed by another individual. Each of these approaches has been employed in empirical research and will be described in this section.

The first approach, measuring the extent to which individuals actually communicate in confirming/disconfirming ways from observations of their behavior, was first employed by Sieburg (1969). Her first system, called the "Interpersonal Responsiveness Category System," contained eight categories: two "functional" categories (functional content response and functional metacommunicative response), five "dysfunctional" categories (impervious, tangential, projective, inadequate, and ambiguous responses), and an "unclassifiable" category (due to unclear recordings or insufficient fragment of the conversation). Detailed descriptions of these response types are available in Sieburg (1969). Allowing expert judges an opportunity to read the category descriptions in advance, she was able to achieve quite a high reliability in two four-hour training sessions. An analysis of variance procedure using Snedecor intraclass correlations yielded $r = .97$. Spearman rank order correlations for the three pairs of judges varied between $r = .88$ and $r = .91$. An item-by-item comparison yielding percentage of agreement yielded a mean percentage for the three pairs of judges of 72%. Sieburg also discovered the validity of this category system. The system was capable of distinguishing known "effective" small groups from known "ineffective" small groups. This aspect of Sieburg's study is described in greater detail in the next section of this paper. Sieburg then used the system by recording frequencies of response types and by computing and comparing percentages.

Sundell (1972) also made observations about confirming and disconfirming communication behaviors. He employed a category system based on Sieburg and Larson's (1971) response categories using those responses that were described as typical of the confirming and disconfirming partners. Again, frequencies were tabulated and percentages of interaction falling into each response type were computed and compared.

The next major advance in scoring confirming/disconfirming communication came from Sieburg (1972). She reconceptualized confirmation as occuring at three levels: (a) acknowledgement vs. imperviousness, (b) conjunctive vs. disjunctive, and (c) affiliative vs. disaffiliative. The conjunctive response was possible with regard to either the content or the emotion of an utterance. Each utterance was scored on each of the three levels. A "zero" was scored at any level in which the utterance disconfirmed the other person and a "+1" was scored at any level in which the utterance being scored confirmed the other. It was not possible to score an utterance at all at a particular level unless the utterance received a "+1" at the previous lower level. One could score an utterance at the third level, however, if the utterance received a plus for either the content or emotion aspect of level two. Since it is possible to respond in a way that confirmed both the content and emotion aspects of the other's utterance at level two and hence to receive two plusses at this level, the maximum score for any utterance was "+4". This system is described in greater detail in Appendix A. This author's experience with this system indicates that it is quite useable. However, so far as I am aware, it has not been employed in empirical research to measure confirming/disconfirming communication.

It now appears unlikely that this system will ever be employed in research because Jacobs (1973) discovered that the underlying distinctions between the levels, on which Sieburg's scoring system was based, were not entirely valid. Since then, Sieburg (1975) has revised the behavioral clusters and formed them into four groupings consistent with Jacobs' findings. Sluster I is called "Indifference" which denies the existence of the other by also denying one's own involvement with the other. This cluster includes such behaviors as turning away from the other, avoiding eye contact, not engaging in interaction with the

other, not replying when a reply seems expected and appropriate, and (if speaking at all) talking in prolonged monologues, frequently interrupting, or speaking in very impersonal ways. Cluster II is called "Disqualification" in which the individual communicates with the other in such a way as to inhibit their continued interaction. This cluster consists of responding in ways totally irrelevant to the other's topic or seeming to miss the main point of the other's speech, using unclear and repetitive language, and making contradictory statements. Cluster III is called "Imperviousness" in which the individual denies the other's self-experience. This cluster involves behaviors such as speaking for another, telling another how he or she should or ought to feel, denying or evaluating the other's expression, advising the other, or being critical of the other while stressing one's own benevolence. Cluster IV is called "Dialogue" in which the individual is engaged in an involving and personal but non-evaluative relationship with the other. This cluster includes speaking when a reply seems expected and appropriate, reacting to the other with congruent nonverbal behaviors, responding relevantly to the other's communication, eliciting more information about the topic or otherwise expressing interest and encouraging the other to talk, speaking in clear and easily understood sentences, and looking at the other, making frequent but not constant eye contact, and giving full and complete attention to the other. Sieburg's more recent publication (1976) also switches the order in which the impervious and disqualification clusters are presented. The content of each behavioral cluster, however, does not seem changed from the 1975 version, which was presented here. (Complete descriptions of these clusters are available in another ERIC document, Sieburg, 1975, pp. 31-34.)

While it should not be too difficult to create a method for scoring interaction from the new behavioral clusters, no one has, as yet, done so. These

clusters could be presumed to have rather high validity as the present clusters are the product of Sieburg's (1969) original study, Sieburg and Larson's (1971) factor analytic results, and Jacobs' (1973) validation of the earlier version of the categories. The reliability of the system would require verification. Procedures similar to those employed in the 1972 category system might be used for scoring.

The second approach to measuring interpersonal confirmation involves determining the extent to which an individual feels confirmed by another individual. To measure this feeling of being confirmed, Sieburg (1973) created the Perceived Confirmation Scale (PCS) (sometimes called the Perceived Confirmation Inventory). The PCS is a six-item summated scale of the Likert type--items two, four, and five are reversed for scoring yielding a maximum perceived confirmation score of 42. A copy of the PCS is included in this paper as Appendix B.

Clarke (1973) was the first to determine test-retest reliability for the PCS. Administrations three weeks apart with twenty subjects yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = .70$. More recently, in Spring, 1976, this author completed another test-retest reliability study of the PCS. Sixty-two students from two sections of a "Dynamics of Human Communication" class were used in this project--half of the students were adults (primarily nurses) enrolled in an evening section and half of which were regular (predominantly Communication major) undergraduate university students. The students completed the PCS on two target persons: "one of your parents" and "a particular same-sex friend." None of the students had any information about either the concept of confirmation or the PCS instrument until after the second administration. Administrations four weeks apart yielded Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of $r = .79$ (parent) and $r = .55$ (same-sex friend). Correlations computed for each class of students separately were roughly the same. Correlation coefficients for the

parent target were r = .74 (adult evening students) and r = .92 (day students), while the correlation coefficients for same-sex friends were r = .50 (adult evening students) and r = .59 (day students). The lower value for the friends may be accounted for in two ways: (a) some students remarked that they were uncertain which friend they had used as a target in the first administration, which may have resulted in a few students not using the same target person in each administration, which would be expected to lower the correlation coefficient, and (b) one might reasonably expect students' perceptions of a same-sex friends' behavior and attitudes toward them to have changed more during the four weeks between administrations than their perceptions of their parents' behavior and attitudes, as the latter have been formed over longer and more continuous association and the former included many recent friends with whom their relationships were developing and changing (positively and negatively) much more quickly. The latter explanation seems more likely and implies that students' feelings of being confirmed by a same-sex friend may be less stable than their feelings of being confirmed by a parent. Therefore, the lower correlation coefficient is more likely to reflect actual changes in the phenomenon under study over the four weeks rather than an instability and lack of reliability in the instrument.

Jacobs (1973) assessed construct validity for the PCS in two ways. First, item/total correlation coefficients were computed for each of the six items over three target persons. Correlation coefficients were moderate to high for each item over the three target persons with the exception of one item on only one of the three targets. Second, comparisons were made between the total scores of each subject for each of the three target persons. Correlation coefficients ranged from r = - .08 to r = + .15, suggesting that raters were able to respond differentially to the targets being rated. The PCS has been

employed by Clarke (1973), Jacobs (1973), Cissna (1975), and Sutton (1976) yielding interesting results. These studies, and others, are reviewed in the next section of this paper.

Two approaches to measuring interpersonal confirmation have been described. One procedure allows researchers to determine the extent to which an individual actually communicates in confirming/disconfirming ways. The second procedure provides a method to determine the extent to which an individual feels confirmed by another. Further work is presently needed in order to translate the most recently validated behavioral clusters into a viable scoring procedure for observing confirming/disconfirming communicative behaviors. Additional work and improvement of the RCS might also be appropriate.

Research in Interpersonal Confirmation

The body of completed empirical research using some aspect of the interpersonal confirmation paradigm is growing. The results are both interesting and instructive. They demonstrate the importance of the concept and suggest directions for further study.

The initial confirmation research project was conducted by Evelyn Sieburg (1969). She attempted to validate the interpersonal response category system which she had created. The system at that time contained two "functional" response categories and five "dysfunctional" response categories. Using three trained raters, she was able to establish quite a high degree of inter-rater reliability (described in the previous section of this paper on measurement). The validity of the system, however, was the more interesting research question. She employed a "known groups" technique and attempted to differentiate between known "effective" and known "ineffective" small groups. The effectiveness of the group was determined by asking group leaders to identify particular groups in their own experience that were "most effective" and those that were "least

effective" according to criteria Sieburg summarized from human relations organizational theory. The criteria were independent of communicative effectiveness. The small groups studied included training, encounter, and therapy groups. She found that, overall, the known effective groups used significantly fewer dysfunctional responses than did the known ineffective groups ($p < .001$). More specifically, the effective group used more "content functional" responses and fewer "impervious," "tangential," and "ambiguous" responses. "Metacommunicational" responses (functional), as well as "projective" and "inadequate" responses (dysfunctional) were not related to the effectiveness of the groups. She found so few responses in the categories ambiguous, projective, and inadequate that she speculated that these may be indicative of psychopathology. On the whole, Sieburg concluded that this system even in its initial relatively unrefined state, was capable of distinguishing known effective groups from known ineffective groups. More effective small groups have as one characteristic that their members communicate more effectively with one another than do the members of known ineffective groups.

The second research project was conducted by Sundell (1972) and employed the interpersonal confirmation response categories discovered by Sieburg and Larson (1971). As described earlier, Sieburg and Larson factor analyzed subjects' descriptions of most and least preferred communication partners and discovered that two factors were capable of describing their responses: they labelled these factors "confirming" and "disconfirming." Sundell used these response types and the descriptions accompanying them to score the interaction of teachers and students in classrooms. He found that most teachers (89%) used primarily confirming communication patterns. This cluster of teachers employed the five confirming categories approximately 90% of the time and the five disconfirming categories only 10% of the time (two categories, interrupting

response and irrelevant response, were omitted by Sundell). These teachers made extensive use of the category "agreement about content." The other 11% of the teachers used confirming and disconfirming responses about equally: approximately one-half of their communication responses to previous student communication behaviors were disconfirming to the students! These teachers were characterized by the relative absence of the "agreement about content" category. Classes of students also seemed to fall into two clusters with regard to their communicative behavior. Most (81%) were predominantly confirming, with the "clarification of content" response distinguishing these classes from the less confirming classes (12% vs. .28%). All students employed "direct acknowledgement" most frequently in response to all teacher communicative acts. Perhaps most importantly, Sundell also found that confirming teachers tended to have confirming students, and that disconfirming teachers also tended to have students who were more disconfirming in their communicative behavior. Apparently, interpersonal confirmation can be contagious.

Jacobs (1973) attempted to test experimentally Sieburg's (1972) hierarchy of interpersonal response categories. The hypothesized order of confirming responses was: (a) affiliation, (b) disaffiliation, (c) furthering, (d) non-furthering, (e) inhibiting, and (f) impervious. Jacobs found that subjects responded differentially to the different treatments. The order of the response categories, however, was not quite as theoretically predicted. Jacobs discovered four levels (now reflected in Sieburg's current theory): (a) sustaining (a combination of what was previously affiliation, furthering, and inhibiting), (b) non-furthering, (c) disaffiliation, and (d) imperviousness. Jacobs also found that subjects who received the more disconfirming conditions reported significantly higher dissatisfaction with the interview experience itself, significantly higher dissatisfaction with the disconfirming interviewer,

and perhaps most importantly, significantly higher dissatisfaction with their own performance in the interview. This finding is quite important and is consistent with the definition of confirming and disconfirming communication quoted earlier from Sieburg and Larson (1971): "Confirmation . . . refers to any behavior that causes another person to value himself more. . . . Disconfirmation refers to any behavior that causes another person to value himself less" (p. 1). In this study, the subjects exposed to the disconfirming condition did come to value themselves less, at least temporarily.

Clarke (1973) attempted to discover which of three interpersonal variables would be the best predictor of marital satisfaction-attraction in each of three stages in marital relationships. He hypothesized that different variables would be the best predictors in different stages of the relationship. Besides perceived confirmation (measured by the PCS), he examined the extent of mutual self-disclosure and the degree of predictive accuracy exhibited by the couples. He found that perceived confirmation accounted for more variance in satisfaction-attraction in these marriages in all three stages than either of the other variables. Interpersonal confirmation accounted for 53%, 43%, and 50% of the marital satisfaction-attraction in each of the three stages, while self-disclosure and accuracy contributed non-significant additional predictive ability in each instance.

Cissna (1975) attempted to test a theory he developed of interpersonal communication. This study of interpersonal communication among married students relates four major classes of variables: (a) the communication of empathy, respect, genuineness, and self-disclosure; (b) personal growth or self-actualization; (c) perceived confirmation; and (d) relationship intimacy. The findings related to confirmation were the following:

1. There is a moderate relationship (r = .38) between the facilitative

communication (a combination of the communication of empathy, respect, and genuineness, based on high intercorrelations) of one person in the relationship and the extent to which the other person felt confirmed. There is no significant relationship between the self-disclosing communication of one person and the other person's feeling of being confirmed.

2. When male and female scores were examined separately, however, the relationship between communication and confirmation became more complex. There was a strong correlation between the facilitative communication of males and the extent to which females reported feeling confirmed (r = .56) and a moderate correlation between male self-disclosing communication and female feelings of confirmation (r = .31). There was no significant relationship, however, between female communication of facilitative and self-disclosing communication and the extent to which men felt confirmed.

3. The degree of intimacy in a relationship is best predicted from a knowledge of the couples' perceived confirmation score. This accounted for 47% of the variance in intimacy. The only other variable which contributed significantly to the regression analysis was personal growth, with female personal growth contributing more than male. Interestingly, though, these later scores were in the direction opposite that which was hypothesized: couples exhibiting more self-actualization were likely to have slightly less intimate relationship than couples lower in self-actualization. All in all, when the scores were separated for sex, 55% of the total variance in relationship intimacy could be accounted for through a knowledge of only female perceived confirmation scores and female personal growth scores.

This study left unanswered at least two important and puzzling questions: (a) since the four speech communication variables studied were not useful in predicting male feelings of being confirmed, what communication variables of

females might be related to male feelings of confirmation? (b) Since this study discovered an equivocal and weak relationship between self-disclosure and confirmation where a strong relationship was thought to exist, what is the place of self-disclosure in interpersonal confirmation?

The place of agreement/disagreement in interpersonal confirmation has been unclear. Sieburg and Larson (1971) found it to be part of the confirmation factor structure of their predominantly male population, but subsequently Sieburg (1973, p. 21) discounted that finding as contrary to the nature of confirmation as discussed by Buber and Laing. Sundell found that "agreement about content" was the most frequent response of confirming teachers and was the response which best distinguished the confirming teachers from the disconfirming ones. Cissna (1975) suggested that "perhaps other communicative behaviors of females (e.g., agreement/disagreement) would be associated with male feelings of being confirmed" (pp. 105-106).

The place of self-disclosure in interpersonal confirmation has also been unclear. Sieburg seemed to place self-disclosing communication ("personal response") within those behaviors that are experienced as confirming, but Larson did not include self-disclosure as a confirming behavior. Cissna's findings in this area were equivocal.

The most recent empirical investigation in the area of interpersonal confirmation (Sutton, 1976) sought to shed more light on the place of agreement and self-disclosure in interpersonal confirmation. She trained interviewers to communicate one of two protocols to undergraduate students randomly selected from introductory speech communication classes. The ostensible purpose of the interview was to gather information concerning the students' opinions of the services provided by the Student Health Service. In one condition, the interviewers agreed with the statements of the students. In the second condition,

interviewers disclosed personal information about themselves relevant to the statements of the students.

Briefly, the findings of this experimental study were as follows:

1. Agreement and self-disclosure by the interviewers were experienced as equally confirming by the students.

2. Male and female students reported different levels of feeling confirmed by the interviewers. Females reported feeling significantly ($p = .007$) more confirmed during the interviews than males did.

3. Agreement by the interviewers was not more confirming to males than to females, and self-disclosure by the interviewers was not more confirming to females than it was to males.

Findings one and three represent a lack of support for the research hypothesis. The expected differences, implied in the statements above, were not found. The second hypothesis, however, was confirmed--unlike previous research (Cissna, 1975), males and females did not feel confirmed at the same levels. What these finding mean about the nature of interpersonal confirmation is not immediately clear. The ambiguity surrounding the place of both agreement/disagreement and self-disclosure does not seem to be entirely resolved. The findings do seem to suggest, however, that some reworking of the theoretical structure may be necessary. Efforts are presently underway by this author to test, in a descriptive fashion in ongoing relationships, the hypothesis that males experience agreement as more confirming than females do.

Summary

This paper has reviewed current theory and research regarding interpersonal confirmation. Several conclusions might be drawn: (a) Interpersonal confirmation may be the most pervasive dimension in human communication. (b) The

two theories of interpersonal confirmation are largely in agreement about the nature of the phenomenon but differ with regard to several important points. These differences demand further investigation. (c) Measurement instruments are available for interpersonal confirmation, but additional work on them is necessary. (d) The research which has been completed is interesting, informative, and important; but it also leaves unanswered as many if not more questions than it answers. More research is needed and deserved if we are to come to a thorough understanding of this most important phenomenon.

Conclusion and Extension

There is presently much controversy regarding the best or most useful conceptualization of the field known as "interpersonal communication." Generally the definitions seem to divide into two categories. There are those who see interpersonal communication firstly as a level of human communication (perhaps best typified by Dance & Larson, 1972, 1976). On the other side are those who see interpersonal communication as primarily a quality of some human communicative acts regardless of level or setting (perhaps best typified by Stewart, 1973; Stewart & D'Angello, 1976). An alternate view has recently been suggested by Miller and Steinberg (1975) who argue that interpersonal communication can profitably be conceptualized as those human communication acts in which individuals' predictions about the other are based on psychological information about the other's uniqueness as a person rather than on sociological or cultural information about characteristics which the person shares with others in particular social groups or cultures. Since in order to confirm another person at the deepest levels one must know that other at those deep levels, we may be able to say that the ability to genuinely confirm another is dependent on the depth of psychological information one has about the other. If so, it may be possible that interpersonal communication is that communication

in which individuals confirm one another. This conceptualization may unite the different definitions within a single framework. A person can only communicate with another person on the basis of the other's uniqueness in one-to-one situations, because as the communicative act approaches the person-to-persons level the source must begin encoding on the basis of what the audience has in common rather than on the basis of each person's uniquenesses. Thus the conceptualization of interpersonal communication as confirming communication seems to incorporate the "level" definition. It should be readily apparent that confirming communication is communication of a very different "quality" than disconfirming communication: the confirming communicator is not treating his or her partner as an object or role but rather is involved in a most intimate and personal act. The disconfirming communicator might be seen as communicating with the other in a way that fails to recognize the uniqueness of that other and hence this communicator is making the other into an object and is not engaging in interpersonal communication by any of the definitions.

To confirm another person is to recognize, acknowledge, and endorse the uniqueness that is the other. To be with another person in a way that communicates to the other the uniqueness that other person is, is to engage in the most intimate of human acts: interpersonal speech communication. For different reasons the conceptualization of interpersonal communication as confirming communication would seem to synthesize both the "level" and the "quality" definitions and have the potential to move the definitional discussion to a further conceptual plane.

Regardless of definitions, however, the process of interpersonal confirmation is truly of vast importance in human experience and deserves careful attention from theorists and researchers of human communication.

REFERENCES

Buber, M. Distance and relation. Psychiatry, 1957, 20, 97-104.

Carkhuff, R. R. Helping and human relations (Vol. 1). Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. (a)

Carkhuff, R. R. Helping and human relations (Vol. 2). Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. (b)

Cissna, K. N. Facilitative communication and interpersonal relationships: An empirical test of a theory of interpersonal communication (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Denver, 1975). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1976, 36, 4103A. (University Microfilms No. 76-1233)

Clarke, F. P. Interpersonal communication variables as predictors of marital satisfaction-attraction (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1973). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1973, 34, 4458A. (University Microfilms No. 73-30,188)

Dance, F. E. X., & Larson, C. E. Speech communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Dance, F. E. X., & Larson, C. E. The functions of human communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Dodge, C. R. Communication factors associated with reduced recidivism of paroled youths in Colorado. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1971.

Dubin, R. Theory building. New York: Free Press, 1969.

Jacobs, M. Levels of confirmation and disconfirmation in interpersonal communication (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1973). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1973, 34, 3593A. (University Microfilms No. 73-30,214)

Laing, R. D. The self and others. New York: Pantheon, 1961.

Laing, R. D. Self and others (2nd ed.), Baltimore: Penguin, 1969.

Larson, C. E. Interaction, dogmatism, and communication effectiveness (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1965). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1966, 27, 275A. (University Microfilms No. 66-06,031)

Larson, C. E. The present state of research and research directions of growth-promoting communication behavior: A response. Paper presented to the University of Wyoming Summer Conference in Communication, Laramie, Wyoming, 1974.

Miller, G. R., & Steinberg, M. Between people. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1975.

Mix, C. R. Interpersonal communication patterns, personal values and predictive accuracies (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1972). Dissertation Abstract International, 1972, 33, 1769B. (University Microfilms No. 72-25,483)

Ross, R. F. Perceived communication patterns and predictive accuracy of supervisor-subordinate dyads (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1973). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1973, 34, 3598A. (University Microfilms No. 72-28,534)

Ruesch, J., Block, Jr., & Bennett, L. The assessment of communication. Journal of Psychology, 1953, 35, 59-80.

Sieburg, E. Dysfunctional communication and interpersonal responsiveness in small groups (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1969). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1969, 30, 2622A. (University Microfilms No. 69-21,156)

Sieburg, E. A study of interpersonal responses. Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association convention, New Orleans, 1970.

Sieburg, E. Toward a theory of interpersonal confirmation. Unpublished manuscript, University of Denver, 1972.

Sieburg, E. Interpersonal confirmation: Conceptualization and measurement. Paper presented at the International Communication Association convention, Montreal, 1973.

Sieburg, E. Confirming and disconfirming communication in an organizational context. Personnel Woman, 1974, 18(5), 4-11.

Sieburg, E. Interpersonal confirmation: A paradigm for conceptualization and measurement. San Diego: United States International University, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 098 634)

Sieburg, E. Confirming and disconfirming organizational communication. In J. L. Owen, P. A. Page, G. I. Zimmerman (Eds.), Communication in organizations. St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1976.

Sieburg, E., & Larson, C. Dimensions of interpersonal response. Paper presented at the International Communication Association convention, Phoenix, 1971.

Stewart, J. Bridges not walls. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1973.

Stewart, J., & D'Angello, G. Together. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975.

Sundell, M. The operation of confirming and disconfirming verbal behavior in selected teacher-student interactions (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972, 33, 1838A. (University Microfilms No. 72-25,030)

Sutton, M. K. Agreement, disclosure, gender, and perceived confirmation. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1976.

APPENDIX A

SIEBURG'S (1972) SYSTEM

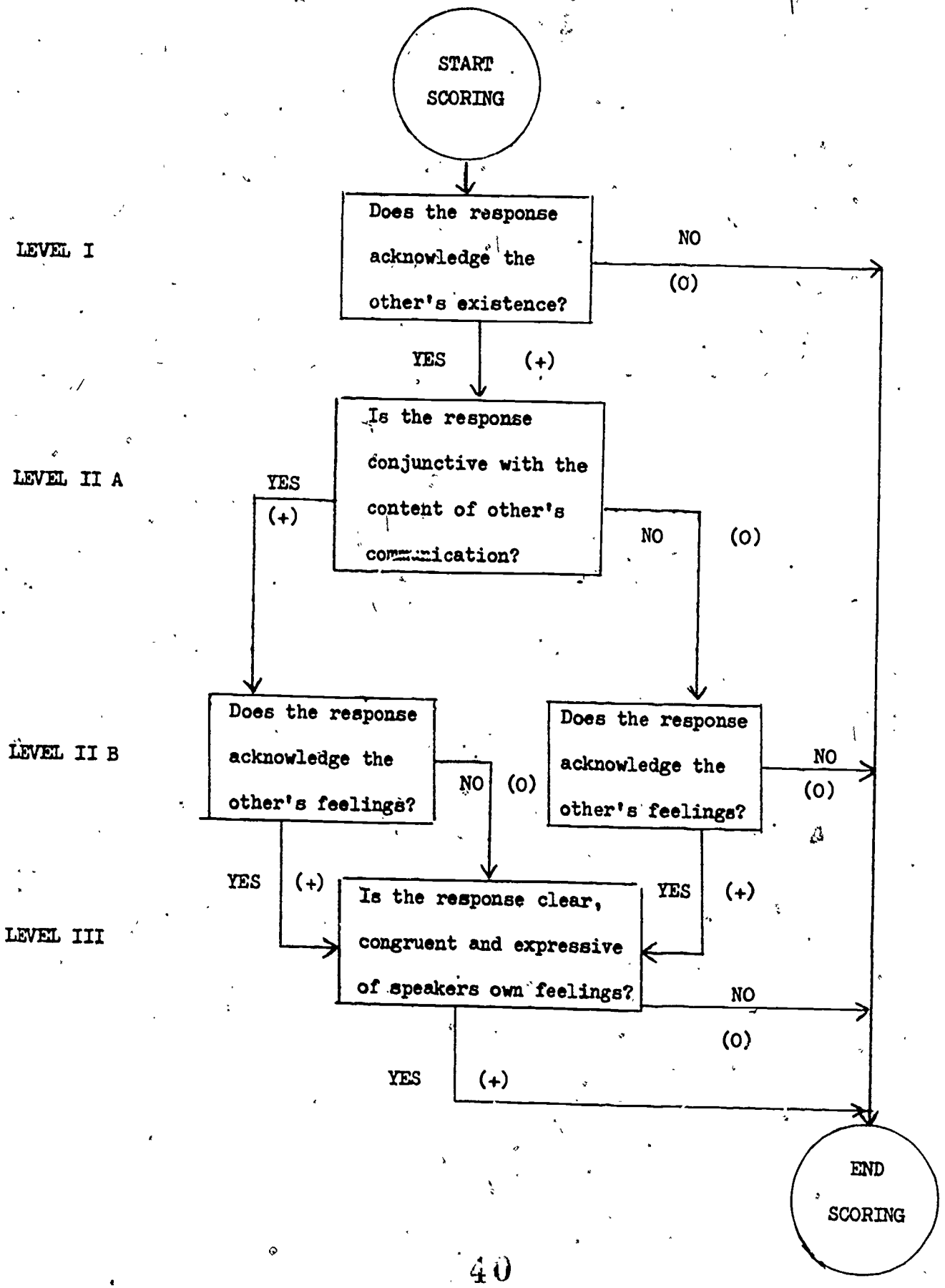
FOR SCORING INTERPERSONAL CONFIRMATION

Description of Categories

LEVEL	SHORT TITLE	DESCRIPTION
I	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	Looks at other while speaking; makes eye contact with him; gives attention without engaging in conversation with another person or performing other tasks. Speaks directly to other.
I	IMPERVIOUSNESS	Looks away from other; avoids eye contact; ignores, pays no attention to other. Interrupts, speaks to another person or performs other tasks while other is speaking; remains silent; makes no response when response seems appropriate; leaves the scene while other is speaking.
II A	CONJUNCTIVE RESPONSE (CONTENT)	Responds relevantly to immediately preceding communication of other. Responds directly and on same subject as other. Provides unevasive answers to questions or expresses clear intent not to answer question ("I don't want to answer that.")
II B	CONJUNCTIVE RESPONSE (EMOTION)	Comments relevantly about other's feelings; expresses own inferences about other's emotional state ("You sound angry to me."); clarifies other's feelings, expressed or inferred. Acknowledges other's emotions without evaluation of them.
II	DISJUNCTIVE RESPONSE	Makes comment or interjection that is irrelevant to either the content of the preceding speaker's communication or his emotional state. Shifts to another topic without warning or explanation for shift. Other special cases to score in this grouping: 1. Interrupts other. 2. Returns to own earlier theme, disregarding intervening interaction. 3. Responds tangentially by reacting to an incidental cue in other's communication, but missing main point. 4. Answers questions evasively or defensively. 5. Verbally denies other's expressed emotion, ("You don't really feel that way.") 6. Negatively evaluates other's feelings by implying he ought not to feel as he does.

LEVEL	SHORT TITLE	DESCRIPTION
III	AFFILIATIVE RESPONSE	Discloses self to other in all of the following ways: 1. Speaks in complete and unfragmented sentences. Referents are obvious, words and expressions are used in commonly accepted ways, utterances are free of cliches and excessive verbage, including unnecessary qualifiers and repetitive speech automisms (such as "you know"). 2. Expresses his own feelings freely and takes responsibility for them. Uses first person whenever appropriate in preference to the impersonal "one" or "you" or the generalized "we." 3. Verbal message seems to agree with nonverbal modes: facial expression, body tone and gesture, tone of voice, and dress.
III	DISAFFILIATIVE RESPONSE	Conceals self or denies responsibility for his own communication in any of the following ways: 1. Communication is obscure and hard to follow; sentences are fragmented, incomplete, rambling; speech is overloaded with automisms, overqualifications, retracings, rephrasings, and false starts. Referents are uncertain; words or expressions have multiple meanings or seem to have meanings peculiar to the speaker. 2. Speaker avoids expressing an emotion, even in response to a direct question, or denies own emotion. Avoids personal construction substituting "one," "you," or a collective "we" when "I" seems more appropriate. 3. Verbal message does not seem consistent with nonverbal modes of voice tone, facial expression, body tone and gesture, or dress. Shows affect that is inappropriate content.

Summary of Scoring Procedures



Sample Scoring Sheet

Unit No	Member No	LEVEL I		LEVEL II			LEVEL III		
		Confirming	Disconfirming	Confirming		Disconfirming	Confirming	Disconfirming	
		(+) Aware	(0) Impervious	Conjuntive		(0) Disjunctive	(+) Affiliative	(0) Disaffiliative	(+'s) Total Score
				(+) Content	(+) Emotion				
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									

APPENDIX B

PERCEIVED CONFIRMATION SCALE

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the number on each scale that most accurately reflects your attitude toward the associated statement as it relates to your partner.

1. He/she is aware of me.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

2. He/she isn't at all interested in what I say.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

3. He/she accepts me.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

4. He/she has no respect for me at all.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

5. He/she dislikes me.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

6. He/she trusts me.

7	6	5	3	2	1
Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly

NAME _____

From Sieburg, 1973.